

OpenTheo

1 Peter 1:3 - 1:12



1 Peter - Steve Gregg

In this commentary, Steve Gregg delves into 1 Peter 1:3-12, examining themes of salvation, regeneration, and Christian motivation. He affirms that salvation is a rescue and deliverance from God, with its final completion to be revealed at the second coming of Christ. Gregg emphasizes the importance of faith, stating that regeneration comes through belief in Christ, and the motivation for a Christian should be to glorify God rather than themselves. He encourages believers to find joy in their trials, knowing that they have an eternal inheritance reserved in heaven.

Transcript

We're going to put in at 1 Peter 1, verse 3, we've had only up to this point an introduction to the book, as well as Peter's own introduction or his opening statements, which in some respects is a formality, but also contains a fair amount of theological meditation that lies behind some, you know, rapidly succeeding one another phrases. So we talked a little about verses 1 and 2. We're going to move on now into the main body of Peter's work. At verse 3, Peter says, Now, in getting up to verse 5, he is, the last concept mentioned is the salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

Some of what he says after this is going to be a branching off of the reference to the salvation. For example, in verse 6, In this you greatly rejoice, means in your salvation. And likewise, in verse 10, Of this salvation the prophets have inquired.

And he goes off a little on that. The subject matter of at least verses 1 through 12, and we've not read all those verses yet, is going to be salvation. Verses 3 through 5 run up to the subject, and verses 6 through 12 kind of branch off and make separate points about salvation.

Some people think salvation is all that Christianity is about, and one could argue that is true if by salvation we have a full-orbed idea of salvation. Too many people think of salvation as just getting rescued from ultimate condemnation on the judgment day, avoiding hell and making it to heaven after all, and that's all that salvation means to them. And they do not realize that salvation, or deliverance, or being rescued by God,

being recovered by God, is something that he does because he has a plan for us, and it's for himself that he saves us for himself.

He redeems us, he bought us back for himself. And for himself doesn't just mean so that we could live in heaven, but he has a need for a people here on earth. That's what he's called us to be, his people on earth.

And that requires that we be changed from what we are when he finds us and become what he wants us to become, which is like Jesus. And that salvation is the process of him rescuing us out of the darkness, implanting the knowledge of his will in our minds, delivering us from the power of sin, and guiding us through the course that he has in mind for us to fulfill. That's in this life.

And then, of course, when we die, we continue to live with him in whatever condition that will be. Now, when I'm talking about Christians, we will be with him, as I understand it, in the new earth. And that is a future aspect of salvation.

But Peter talks about salvation as something that is happening now, as well as something that's coming in the future. The future part he's talking about is in verse 5. He says, we are kept by faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. That salvation, the total completion of our salvation will be revealed in the last time when Jesus comes back, I believe.

But in the meantime, we are in the process of being saved as well. And coming, ramping up to the topic of salvation in verses 3 through 4, he's got a ton of theological things that are woven together here. And I want to look at some of them.

We can't go into all of them as much as they would deserve, because each of them would be at least a semester in a systematic theology course, I suppose. He says, blessed be the God and Father, verse 3, of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Now, according to God's mercy, we're told that he regenerated us.

We're begotten again, means we've been regenerated, we've been born again. Now, he says our beginning again is unto a living hope. And, of course, the hope that we have, as we've talked about in discussing other portions of the Bible, is the hope of being like Jesus.

Everyone who has that hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure, John says in 1 John 3. Paul talks about Christ in you as the hope of glory. The blessed hope is the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our hope is to become like Christ.

That's a living hope, and we've been begotten unto that hope, which means that we have reason to be hopeful now, because we've been begotten again. The basis of our

hope is that as Christ was raised from the dead and glorified, we shall be raised from the dead and be glorified. And the fact that we've been born again spiritually is sort of the precursor of that.

The fact that he's resurrected us spiritually, from spiritual death to spiritual life, is the token of what he will eventually do at the end of the world when he raises all the bodies from the dead. So, to be glorified like Christ in our resurrection bodies has its foretaste, as it were, in being born again. So being born again is sort of what gives us a reason to hope for being resurrected from the dead.

We've already been passed from death unto life in one sense. And Jesus said, do not marvel at this, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live. In John chapter 5, he said that.

Now, the hour is coming, and now is, that the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and live. The hour is coming at the end of the world, when those in the graves will hear his voice and come out. The time now is when the dead hear the voice of the Son of God and live, in the sense that we already have.

We've heard the voice of God in the gospel, we have received it, and we have passed from death unto life. So Jesus says in John 5, 24. And so we've been begotten again, we've already experienced that resurrection, from death to life, spiritually speaking.

This idea is found in Paul in a number of places, Ephesians chapter 2. In the beginning of Ephesians chapter 2, Paul says, you he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins. And then again in verse 5 of Ephesians 2, even when we were dead in trespasses, he made us alive together with Christ by grace you've been saved. So our salvation begins when we come to life from the dead.

It's not the end, that's the beginning of our salvation. The end is in glorification at the end. But God made us alive from the dead, and that was the beginning of the process of salvation.

In Colossians chapter 2, Paul has this in mind also. Colossians 2, 13, Paul says, and you being dead in your trespasses and uncircumcision of your flesh, he has made alive together with him, having forgiven you all your trespasses. So God has found us dead and made us alive.

So Peter begins his discussion of salvation, which in verse 5 he'll say is awaiting to be manifested in the end times. It's already begun with our being born again. Jesus told Nicodemus in John chapter 3, unless you're born again you can't see the kingdom of God.

And that discussion about being reborn has its earliest occurrence in Jesus teaching with Nicodemus in John chapter 3, although the idea of being born again is found also in John's other writings. First John 5, 1 says, whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is

born of God. So we're born again.

And everyone who loves him who begot, that is everyone who loves God, loves those who are begotten of him, that is his children. You love God, you'll love his children. It says in the gospel of John chapter 1, verse 12, as many as received him, to them he gave the power to become the children of God.

This is through rebirth, being begotten of God. And so Peter has this idea in mind. He heard it from Jesus.

Paul has described it too. Salvation begins with being born again and receiving a new life supernaturally from God through faith. Now at the end of verse 3 it says, he's begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

That is Christ's resurrection is that through which we are born again. Now exactly how Christ's resurrection is connected with our being born again is not something that everyone has the same opinion about. Some people think that Paul's idea is that when Christ was raised from the dead, in him we were raised from the dead and that was our rebirth.

And others think of it more as a subjective thing that happens when we come to faith. Even though Jesus was raised from the dead 2,000 years ago, I come to life when I come to faith. And I don't know that Paul has a distinction between these two ideas in mind.

I think his idea is that Jesus rose from the dead. That inaugurated the new order. He was glorified.

He was not like Jairus's daughter whom he raised from the dead or Lazarus whom he raised from the dead who simply came back to life in the old order. They were dead. They came back to life, but they weren't glorified.

They weren't transformed. Mortality for them did not put on immortality. That didn't happen in those earlier times.

But when Jesus rose from the dead, he was the first fruits of a general harvest from the dead, the first fruits of those who slept, the first born from the dead, he is called in Colossians 1.18 and Revelation 5. And so Jesus' resurrection from the dead is the first of a whole order. And when we are individually born again, we are included in him. We are now in that order too.

Through his resurrection of the dead, we experience a regeneration. And this seems to say that before Jesus rose from the dead, people were not regenerated who were believers. Those Old Testament saints did not experience regeneration, at least not in the same sense.

We do know that when King Saul fell among the prophets, it says he became a new man. And some people say a new spirit came upon him. Some say he was regenerated like we are.

Well, I don't know. I don't know if it's like we are because our rebirth is through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. And we don't really find that happening, not normally in the Old Testament at all.

My opinion is at this point that in the Old Testament saints like Abraham, faith was reckoned to them for righteousness. That is, they were justified. Justification is part of what happens to us when we come into Christ.

We are justified. But it's not the only thing that happens to us. In addition to being justified, we are regenerated.

I think saints in the Old Testament could be justified by faith, which means that because they believed in God, they were counted righteous. That's fine to be counted righteous. That means their crimes and sins against God are expunged from the record.

That's good. That's the only part of salvation some Christians want or think about at all. But even that existed before Jesus came.

But regeneration, I don't think so. I think that it was after Jesus rose from the dead and inaugurated the new order, the new creation, as it were, that we can now say if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away and all things become new.

You become a new creature. Peter refers to his readers as babes, as newborn babes. In chapter 2, verse 2, he says, He wasn't writing to children's ministry.

He was writing to adults, but he called them newborn babes because they were born again. And so this is how we begin our Christian walk. Because of Jesus' resurrection, because of the special power unleashed into the world in creating a new order through the resurrection of Christ, there has been something that we participate in by faith.

We participate in his resurrection, and we're new creation. All that that means, I suppose, probably has not been fathomed by us. But it does mean that that's the beginning of the Christian life.

It's not just you join a church, or you get baptized, or you say a sinner's prayer, but there's something supernatural that happens, not just what you do, but God does. You pass from death into life, and obviously you can't make yourself do that. That's God's work.

Now, I want to say this, though, that there is disagreement among theologians as to whether God rebirths us so that we can believe, or whether we believe so that we can be

reborn. In other words, the question is, what precedes what? Does faith precede regeneration, or does regeneration precede faith? And this is a controversy between Calvinists and non-Calvinists. The Calvinist believes that if you're not born again, you're so dead in trespasses and sins that you can't do anything, including believe.

You can't believe, you can't repent, you can't make a decision for Christ, you're dead. God has to bring you to life first, and then you can believe. That he regenerates a person first, then they believe and repent and become followers of Christ.

This is the Calvinist view, and therefore it requires their doctrine of unconditional election, because to be born again is something that you can't do anything to make happen, and you can't meet any conditions for it, you're dead. And therefore God makes the choice of who he's going to do that for. That's the Calvinist doctrine.

God chooses whom he will regenerate, and when he does, he regenerates them unilaterally, and then they become believers. Now, those who are not Calvinists have taken the view that you are born again because you believe. You're not born again so that you can believe.

Of course, Christians all agree that we were dead in trespasses and sins, but the non-Calvinist takes the dead metaphor less literally. When the Calvinist says, well, you can't believe because you're dead, and dead people can't believe, well, one would argue that that almost proves too much. If you're really dead in the sense that dead people are dead and you can't believe because you can't do anything, well, then presumably a dead person who's dead in trespasses and sins can't do anything, because dead people can't.

They can't get up out of bed in the morning. They can't brush their teeth. They can't go to work.

They can't have conversations. Dead people don't do those things. Well, obviously people who are dead in trespasses and sins do all those things and many things more, and therefore when Paul says we're dead in trespasses and sins, he's not trying to argue that we are literally like dead corpses that can't do anything, and of course they know that.

Calvinists know that, but what they'd say is, well, when you're dead in trespasses and sins, you can do lots of things, but you can't do anything with reference to a move toward God. You can't repent or believe because you're spiritually dead. Well, I guess I'd have to ask how do you make that distinction? If your whole argument is that a person can't believe because they're dead, but then you admit that dead people can do some things, how do you decide that believing is one of the things that a dead person can't do? How do you select among the things that, by your metaphor of death, you allow a dead person to do or not? And the truth is there's no scripture that says that a dead person, spiritually dead, can't believe.

As a matter of fact, it is expected that they will. The prodigal son came home and his father said, my son was dead, but now he's alive. Okay, he was dead when? When he was away from his father.

What happened then? He made a decision while he was away from his father. I'm going to go home. I'm going to repent.

I'm going to come home and maybe I can be a servant of my father. This he did while he was dead, so to speak, in the metaphor. A person who is spiritually dead can make decisions to return to God.

They can't restore themselves to God. That's up to God to do, but they can make a decision to pursue that. When Nicodemus asked Jesus, how can these things be? He was asking about how can a man be born again? That's the thing Jesus brought up.

And Jesus, by the way, answered that question. In John 3, verse 4, Nicodemus said, how can a man be born when he's old? And Jesus answered, well, there's two kinds of birth. You can be born of water and you can be born of the spirit.

You've got to be born of both. And he talks about the spirit blows, you know, like the wind where he wants to. And you don't understand all that, but you still believe in that.

And then in verse 9, Nicodemus answered and said, how can these things be? What things? How can it be that people be born again of the spirit? Well, that's a good question. And there's a good answer. Jesus answered and said to him, are you a teacher of Israel and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, we speak what we know and we testify what we've seen.

And you do not receive our witness. Going on, jumping down to verse 14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Now, he said, how can a man be born again? You'd believe you believe in Christ and then you'll have that everlasting. You'll be born out of death and have everlasting life. Regeneration comes because you believe.

You don't believe because you were previously regenerated. You are regenerated because you previously believed. And if you look at the end of John's gospel, John 20.

Not the very end, but almost the last verses of John 20. Verses 30 and 31, John says, and truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name. Well, having life is meaning coming, passing from death into life.

You don't have life until you believe in him, that you may believe and that by believing you may have life. Not that by having life, you may believe. Believing is prior.

Even the verse we read a while ago in Colossians chapter 2, makes it very clear that Paul believed that you aren't born again or don't come from death and life until you believe. In Colossians chapter 2, reading again verse 13, excuse me, 13, mostly just that verse, but 14 also continues with the thought. Colossians 2.13, Paul says, and you being dead in your trespasses and uncircumcision of your flesh, he has made alive together with him.

Okay, you've been born again. You've passed from death and life. You were dead.

You've been made alive. Having forgiven you all trespasses. Now, the structure that means that having previously forgiven you, he has brought you from death into life.

Having forgiven you is speaking of a prior thing. God has brought you from death into life. Having prior to that, having forgiven you.

Well, when did he forgive you? When you're justified. How are you justified? Justified by faith. You believed in Christ.

He forgave you. And having done that, he brought you from death into life. So, everywhere that there's any conversation on this subject about faith and regeneration, Jesus or Paul, doesn't matter who you talk to, they all say that regeneration comes as a result of faith.

Which means that even though you are dead in trespasses and sins, that metaphor shouldn't be pressed so far as to suggest that you can't choose life. A similar argument is made that we were slaves of sin. And slaves can't just choose to walk out free.

They have to be delivered supernaturally. Well, that's fair enough. But a slave can want to be free.

A slave can look forward to being free. A slave can cry out for help to somebody who's able to free him. It's true a slave can't just walk free.

There has to be a deliverance. There has to be a salvation. There has to be someone stronger than him to let him go.

But that doesn't mean the slave can't want to go. Can't cry out to. Can't ask.

And so, being a slave or being dead, these metaphors are not suggesting that people have no power to seek God. In fact, it's only as they seek God that they will find mercy. It says, according to his abundant mercy, he has begotten us again.

Well, what comes prior to mercy? Repentance. Faith comes prior to mercy. Even showing

mercy comes prior to that.

Jesus said, Blessed are the merciful. They shall obtain mercy. In other words, there are things that a person who hasn't yet been saved is expected to do in the process of becoming saved.

They have to humble themselves. They have to believe in Christ. They have to repent.

And God, that's what he commands all men everywhere to do. And when they do it, he responds. He justifies.

He regenerates and so forth through the power of Christ's resurrection. Now, the sentence doesn't end at the end of verse 3. A little like Paul's sentences in Ephesians, this goes on for several verses. It says, we've been begotten again through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to an inheritance.

Now, being born again means we have an inheritance. When you're born into a family, you're in the will. Your father leaves what is his to you, to his family.

And so if you've been born again, you're born to an inheritance. Now, Jews, by virtue of their natural birth, had an inheritance in the promised land. But these Christians have been born again, and they have an inheritance also, but it's a better inheritance than that which was given to Israel in the promised land.

This is an incorruptible and undefiled and does not fade away kind of an inheritance. Incorruptible means it does not decay. Undefiled means it does not, you know, become what we'd call corrupted.

It doesn't become compromised. And does not fade away means it's eternal. And therefore, our life that we've been born into, and the inheritance we receive from being in this family, is one that is eternal.

Sometimes we're asked, and someone asked this last week, if the word, Ionious, translated everlasting or eternal in our English Bibles, if it doesn't always mean unending, but sometimes just means a long time, then how do we know that our eternal life is unending? If it's Ionious life, and Ionious doesn't always mean unending, then what hope do we have, what assurance do we have that our life in Christ is unending? There's plenty of other ways the Bible talks about it being unending. You don't need the word Ionious for that. It does not fade away.

Our inheritance does not fade away. It doesn't disappear. It goes on and on.

It doesn't reduce as time goes by. This is not like the Jews' inheritance in the land, which they lost, and which was just a natural inheritance. We have something that's eternal.

And he says it's reserved in heaven for you. Our inheritance is being reserved for us.

Where? In a safe place.

It doesn't mean that we necessarily will be living in heaven at the time we receive it, but it's reserved there, just like I've got something in a safe deposit box at a bank. It's reserved there in a safe place. I don't ever plan to go live in the safe deposit box, but that's where I'm keeping that until I need it.

And where God's keeping our future benefits is with Christ in God. Our life is hid with Christ in God, the Bible says, and this is in heaven at the place. Jesus contrasted things laid up in heaven from things laid up on earth in this very respect, that things on earth thieves break through and steal, and moth and rust corrupts treasures on earth.

But if you lay up your treasures in heaven, they're safe there. Thieves don't break through and steal. Moths don't corrupt them there.

It's incorruptible. It's reserved in heaven for us. It's a safe place.

When Jesus comes back, he said, my reward is with me. He'll bring it with him when he comes here. And speaking of us in verse five, it says we are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Now we have salvation at one level now, but there is a salvation that's waiting to be revealed when it's all over. That's when we're resurrected and glorified. That's the ultimate end.

But I mean, that doesn't mean we're not saved now. It's just that salvation has its many aspects, the past, present and future. This is a reference to the ultimate hope of being like Christ in the resurrection.

But he says we are in the meantime kept by the power of God through faith. This verse is a very important verse with reference to the perseverance of the saints. Once again, we have some differences in ways theologians understand this.

The Calvinist theologian believes that perseverance is inevitable. If you're definitely one of the elect, then you will persevere. It's a given.

That's part of having that status of being one of the elect is that you will persevere. You will not fall away. You'll be a faithful Christian till you die.

And this verse is often quoted to make that point. The word kept here means guarded. It's the same word that Paul used once when he was describing what happened to him when he was in Damascus.

And it's in 2 Corinthians. He mentions that Aratus, the king of the Damascus, kept the city. That is, guarded the city, had a garrison around the city to catch him.

That's when he was let out of a window in a wall in a basket to get away. But he said that Aratus kept the city. It's the same Greek word here.

He was guarding it. And often theologians say when they talk about this verse, this word kept means to be guarded as with a garrison or as with troops. It's like God is keeping us.

Our salvation is kept. We are kept by the power of God. The power of God is limitless.

And therefore they say nothing could make you fall away. You couldn't possibly fall away. If God's power and nothing less is guarding you, then how could you ever fall away from Christ? It's a good question.

And certainly one can appreciate it being asked. But the answer may be inherent in the verse itself. We are kept by the power of God.

It is true. But there's this little phrase, through faith. Faith.

Now, faith is what we bring. We believe. Faith is believing.

So as we believe God, his power keeps us. If we abandon the faith, if we give up faith in God, if we surrender and say, I don't want to be a follower of Christ anymore. I don't believe in him anymore.

Well, then you're not going to be kept by the power of God for salvation if you've left Christ. Faith is the condition for rebirth. It's the condition for perseverance.

It's the condition for salvation in general. Paul says in Ephesians 2, 8 and 9. By grace, you have been saved through faith. We have been saved.

Salvation is by grace, but it's through faith. If you don't have faith, then you can't be saved by grace through faith. There's no faith there for the through, for the grace to come through.

And Paul said in Romans 5, 2. That he says in him, we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand. We stand in grace as we maintain that access to grace through faith. Romans 5, 2. Faith is that conduit through which the grace of God continues to flow into our lives.

And it's that grace that keeps us. It's that grace that saves us. And so we are kept by the power of God through faith.

As we trust in Christ, the power of God continues to keep us. There's no reason in the world why we shouldn't trust in Christ for the rest of our lives. And for the rest of eternity, for that matter.

So, we have every reason to be assured. The power of God will keep us safe in him forever. Unless, of course, the faith goes away.

And that's our choice. If we decide not to believe anymore, that's our call. Anyone can believe, that's a choice.

Faith isn't just something that happens to you. Faith is that you choose to believe in God. You judge him faithful.

You judge that he's able to perform what he's promised. That's faith. You can make that judgment or you can refuse to make it.

And some people make it for a little while, then give up on it. It doesn't make sense to me, but I think many times they're not giving up on it because they've run out of good evidence that Christ is real. But because they're drawn away into temptations, things that they think will bring them more happiness than following Christ.

Not so much that it's hard to believe in Jesus. It's not hard to believe in Jesus. If you've ever known him, it's hard not to believe in him.

But people can give up their faith in him because they love something more than they love him and they want to go another direction. But although people sometimes do that, there's never any reason to fear that that'll happen to you. This is not something that happens to people.

It's something they choose. Losing your faith isn't something that occurs to you. It's something that you do.

You give up. You stop believing. And therefore, if you don't stop believing and there's no reason in the world why you should stop, then you can be count on it.

Your salvation is secure. I believe in eternal security. I just don't believe in unconditional eternal security.

I believe in conditional security of the believer. But the conditions are easy enough to meet. Just believe in Christ.

That's how you get saved. That's how you are saved. That's how you stay saved.

You're kept by faith, through faith, by the power of God unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Now, I mentioned that when he mentions salvation in verse 5, he then branches out two different directions to talk about it. One of those branches is in verses 6 through 9. And the other is in verses 10 through 12.

Salvation is the subject from which these two paragraphs branch in separate directions to give different thoughts concerning it. In verse 6, he says, Now, it should be noted that

this receiving the end of your faith is present tense. You are receiving, even now, the salvation of your souls.

There is a salvation waiting to be revealed in the end time, when Jesus comes back. But there's also the salvation we're receiving now. We're being saved day by day from our sins.

We're being rescued. We're being revamped. We're being recovered for God back into his own image, from glory to glory.

This is a process that begins when we're born again and continues until we die and are resurrected. That God is saving our souls now from what we were before. And he's going to talk more about that salvation in verse 10.

But let's look at the substance of verses 6 through 9. In this salvation, you greatly rejoice. Now, this section is about rejoicing in salvation. We rejoice in salvation.

And he qualifies that. He says we rejoice in spite of two things that might dampen our joy. You rejoice in him although or in spite of the fact that you may have to suffer trials, he says.

He says in this salvation you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials. Now, he's saying trials, we can understand, would be something that might dampen your joy. But there's a reason that we rejoice in salvation even though we are going through these trials.

Why? Because we recognize that the genuineness of our faith is being tested by these trials. Are we going to be loyal to God or are we not going to be loyal? That's what trials are for. That's why the devil is allowed to test us, so that he can sort us out, the fakes or the wimpy who are not very loyal to him from those who are.

The genuineness of our faithfulness, our faith in him, is being tested. And it's worth as much to God as gold, only more, more precious than gold. Now, gold itself has to go through testing too.

Gold is about as valuable to people as almost anything in the world is, but it needs to be tested. Because if someone hands you something that they call gold, a ring, and they say, this is a gold ring, it's 14 karat gold. Well, you might want to take it to an assayer and say, is this really 14 karat gold? And he might say, well, I'm going to have to melt this down and see.

So, you know, the gold has to be tested to see if there's dross in it or not, to see if it's real gold or not. So that's how our faith is, our professed faith in God. Is it genuine like gold or is it an alloy? And so it has to be tested by fire, as gold is tested by fire, so that the genuine faith we have will be found in the end after testing to the praise, honor, and

glory of God, which is, of course, what it's all about.

This is a very important thing to note. That's not just sort of a religious tag on the end of the sentence. Peter is assuming that his readers want most of all that God would be praised and honored and glorified.

And therefore, if that's what happens, if my trials bring out something that is to the praise and glory and honor of God, well, then I'll rejoice in it, even though it's painful. It's a painful trial, but it's worth it if God is glorified and praised and honored at the end of it. Now, he doesn't say, essentially, he could have said, after you've gone through your trials, it'll end up to the praise and honor and glory of you.

After all, you'll be exalted, you'll be recognized, God will honor you and put crowns on your head and give you a throne and many cities to rule over. That all may be true, too. All that may, in fact, be true, as the Bible seems to indicate in different places.

But that's not Peter's assumption. Peter's not assuming that you're selfishly motivated here by your glory and your ultimate honor and destiny. Of course, you're a Christian.

You want God to be glorified. That's the difference between being a Christian and being a non-Christian, is that you have decided it's not about you, it's about God. It's not about you having the best deal, it's about God getting what he should have.

It's not about you being honored, it's about God being honored. This is the fundamental shift in the mentality of someone at conversion, when they repent, they change the mind in this very respect. I want God to be praised.

I want God to be glorified. That's all I want. Now, of course, I'm not so selfless that I don't find some comfort in the fact that there's rewards for the suffering for me too, that things will be better for me in the future than they are now.

That's good, I'm glad. I'm not 100% selfless, but my motivation is not about myself. And I think I can say this very sincerely, and some people have questioned this even when I've said it before, but this is something I've asked myself all my life.

If there was no reward after this life, and this life was entirely suffering for Jesus, and there's no hell, no heaven, no consciousness beyond the grave ever, if this life was all there was, and a miserable one at that, with suffering and persecution and trials and things like that, but if I was guaranteed that at least God will be happy, God will be glorified, I may not be around to know it, but God will get glory out of my life, I believe I'd still choose the same way of life I have. I mean, I don't see the future that bleakly. I do believe there's great glory and great joy and great enjoyment in the next life for the faithful.

But if you love God, what else would you want to do than glorify God? What are the

options? To live a different way and accomplish what? I mean, at the end of your life, if you haven't served God, what have you accomplished? That's worth having done. Maybe someone can answer that question. I can't.

To me, the only thing worth accomplishing is that God be glorified in his creatures. That's what he made them for. He made them for his glory.

All have sinned and come short of what? Heaven? No, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. We have failed to glorify God. That's what we have to repent of and what we need to aim at in the future.

Paul said, Whether you eat or drink, do all for the glory of God. Jesus said, Let your light shine before men so they'll see your good works and they'll glorify you. No, they'll glorify your father when they see your good works.

The Christian motivation is about God, not about self. That's the very thing that's different. If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself.

No more me first. No more it's about me. It's all about God now.

And that's the only way to really find true fulfillment in this life, even if there was nothing in the next life, but Peter says there is. There's an inheritance incorruptible and that doesn't fade away and this salvation causes us to rejoice even in the midst of the suffering. We know God is going to be glorified, but we also get something out of it.

It's a win-win. So even though we face various trials, he says, which would ordinarily not encourage our happiness, we can be happy knowing what comes of them. Now, this Peter seems to be influenced.

Well, he might be just influenced by the Holy Spirit independently of Paul, but he just so happens to be saying exactly the same thing Paul said in Romans 5. Because in Romans 5, 2, it says, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Our hope is that God will be glorified in us. And not only that, but we also glory or boast or rejoice in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance, perseverance produces character, character produces hope, and the hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has given to us.

Notice we rejoice our tribulations also because we know that something good to the glory of God is going to come of it. That's what Peter says. We rejoice in spite of trials because it's like the trine of gold and it'll all come out if our faith is genuine, come out the other end of the trial as gold, glorifying God.

Job said, when he has tried me or tested me, I will come forth as gold. I don't have that in my notes, but I think that's in Job 23, 10, maybe. Let me just quickly see.

If it's not there, I'm not going to go looking further for it, but yeah, it's Job 23, 10. But he knows the way that I take when he has tested me, I shook him forth as gold. That's what Peter says, essentially the same thing.

So because of the salvation we have, trials are much more bearable and we know that God's going to be glorified in our lives. But more than that, it's not only the testing that might put a damper on our joy. Something else might, but doesn't.

And that is that we haven't even seen him yet. Faith is the evidence of things not seen and we have not seen Jesus. So our joy is based on faith.

It's in spite of the fact that we have trials, it's in spite of the fact that we can't see the very thing that we are pursuing. In verse 8 of Jesus Christ, it says, So the joy we have is a joy that comes from faith. We haven't seen Jesus yet.

We do love him, but we haven't ever seen him. It's like falling in love with somebody you've heard about or corresponded with as a pen pal or something, but never have ever laid eyes on them. But you believe they're there and they're promising to come see you and you do expect that and that makes you rejoice.

Even though you haven't seen them, you trust them. It is faith in the Christian that causes rejoicing. And that's true in trials or not in trials.

In general, we're joyful to go be with Jesus though we haven't seen him. Our entire expectation is based on faith. But then in trials, it's even more tested.

The faith is tested there. Because, I mean, what the devil says in here, what if it's not really true? You're suffering all this for Christ and what if he's not even there? What if there's no one there? Well, by faith, we love him and trust him. And that faith is being tested by these trials that we go through.

And it says that you, in verse 8, it says, Yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls. Like I said, receiving is a present tense verb. We are moment by moment receiving the benefits of our salvation.

We are moment by moment being rescued, being changed from glory to glory. We don't always see the change quite so quickly from moment to moment. Sometimes it might be months or years between major changes that we can actually see.

But every moment that we keep focused in one direction is our roots are going down deeper into the right soil. You know, bending a sapling that's growing a little crooked and warped isn't necessarily something that you can fix right away. You put a straight stick next to it and you bind the sapling on it.

And as it grows, the pressure, constant pressure from that immovable stick just straightens the tree up a little bit. Every second that that sapling is attached to the stick, it's in a small way moving in the direction of a straighter tree that may be so slow that someone watching it day by day can't see the difference. It's a long pressure in the same direction establishes a foundation and roots and habits and so forth.

And so our salvation, every moment that we continue to trust in Christ is working for us an eternal waiting of glory. And he says in verse 10, this is his other digression, of this salvation, the prophets have inquired and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them, that is to the prophets in the Old Testament who were prophesying these things, to them it was revealed that it was not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which have now been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things which even the angels desire to look into.

Now, this section indicates some important things. One of those things is that the gospel salvation we have was not something unknown until the coming of Christ. It was prophesied by the Old Testament prophets.

Now, depending on who you listen to, mainstream dispensationalists believe that the church was a mystery not mentioned in the Old Testament. All the prophecies in the Old Testament about glory and salvation, they say, is about Israel in the future. They say the church was a mystery not revealed until Christ came and through the Holy Spirit revealed it to his apostles.

And they say, therefore, you cannot find the church in the Old Testament. You can't find us. But Peter disagreed.

He said those prophets back then, they spoke about us and our salvation. This salvation that we are experiencing was prophesied by those prophets in the Old Testament. So the church and our present salvation is indeed the subject of the Old Testament prophecies.

But where do you find it in there? Well, frankly, it's in passages that sound like they're about Israel because the early church recognized that the Christian church is the Israel that the prophets spoke of, the redeemed Israel, the new Jerusalem, the new Jew, and so forth. And so this tells us that the church was not something that God thought up later, but it was something the Old Testament prophets predicted, our salvation in Christ. They spoke, he says, of the grace that would come to us.

That's in Christ. And it says they searched diligently, verse 10 says, because they were inquiring about something. And verse 11 says they were searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating.

The Holy Spirit's called the Spirit of Christ here. Paul uses that expression also in Romans 8, the Spirit of Christ. But the Old Testament prophets had the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit speaking through them, about Christ and about the glories that should follow, about his sufferings.

And the Holy Spirit was indicating something and they searched what it was that he was indicating when he testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. So Christ's sufferings and the salvation that's come to us as a result, they asked, they prophesied about, but they didn't know what it meant. And they asked God what that was about.

And it says they didn't get a straight answer, at least not the answer they were hoping for. He didn't answer their question except to say, it's none of your business. It's not for you.

It's for a later generation to know. He says to them, it was revealed that not to themselves, but to us, they were misery, us Christians, because they were talking about the Christian era, not about their own. And they did not live to see that era.

So they're not missing to their own generation, but to ours, Peter says. And what they ministered, these are the things which have now been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit, the apostles themselves, of course, and the evangelists that were sent out from them. The Holy Spirit has testified these things to you through the preaching of the gospel.

He says, these are also things the angels desire to look into. Now, what is this? What Old Testament prophets did this? Where is Peter getting this information about the Old Testament prophets asking for this kind of information and receiving this kind of an answer? Isaiah didn't ask, or Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, as far as we know, we have no record of them ever asking questions like this of God and getting this kind of answer. We don't find it in any of the minor prophets.

I only know of one prophet of whom this could be said, Daniel, in chapter 12. And if that is so, if Peter is speaking of Daniel, and he says prophets, perhaps he's saying, well, Daniel probably wasn't the only one. We only have record of Daniel asking, but certainly the other prophets must have had the same curiosity he did.

Peter may be presuming that the other prophets off the record did have these questions, but Daniel's the only one who had these questions and received this answer on the record. So it seems like Peter must be referring to Daniel 12, which interestingly is one of the hardest chapters in Daniel to understand. And Peter's allusion to it, if that's what he's doing, actually will give us a little help because it actually, it will tell us something about what Peter thought about this chapter.

If you look at Daniel 12 and verse six, we could earlier verse four, but you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall increase. Then I, Daniel, looked and there stood two others, no doubt angels, one on this river bank and the other on the other river bank.

And one said to the man clothed in linen who was above the waters of the river, how long shall the fulfillment of these things be? Look, even the angels wonder about this. Even the angels desire to look into this. They ask questions about it too.

Then I heard the man clothed in linen who was above the waters of the river when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever that it shall be for a time, sometimes and half the time. And when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all the things shall be finished. All these things shall be finished.

Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, my Lord, what shall the end of these things be? This is the very kind of question Peter said that the prophets asked when they were told about us. And he said to me, go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.

It's not for you to know. It's not for your generation. It's for a later generation to know.

Many shall be purified, made white and refined. Sounds like 1 Peter 1, 7. But the wicked shall do wickedly and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. And then he gives some numbers that are almost unintelligible.

But he says in verse 13, but you go your way until the end for you shall rest and will rise in your inheritance in the end of the days. Now, Daniel asked for some more specific information about these obscure prophecies he was receiving. He was told it's not for you to know.

It's sealed up until the end. Knowledge about these things will increase in later days. Men will run to and fro, and knowledge will increase, and a later generation will understand this, which you don't.

Understand you're not supposed to. It's sealed up until the time of the end. The time of the end of what? I've heard Bible prophecy preachers quote Daniel nine incorrectly, as if he said these words are closed up and sealed till the end of time.

It doesn't say the end of time. It says the time of the end. And of course, the question is the end of what? Maybe the end of the 70 weeks, which was the prophecy in chapter nine that kind of started this whole section of Daniel.

The end of Jerusalem, the end of the Jewish order, maybe. Hard to say. Some people think it's the end of the world, but that's not a necessary inference.

Peter's talk says there were prophets who spoke about the sufferings of Christ, the glories would follow, the grace that would come to you, us, his generation and ours, receiving salvation in Christ. The prophets spoke of this, and those prophets asked for more information about it, and were told it's not for you to know. If he's talking about Daniel, and if he's not, who could he be talking about? We know of no other passage in the Old Testament that even remotely resembles what Peter's saying.

And Peter's already been talking about how we are purified like gold through fire. This is what the angel said to him. Many will be purified and refined and made white.

Peter says these prophets were speaking about us. They're speaking about our time, about our salvation, about the grace coming to us, about our sufferings. The church, these were predicting the church.

Now, if Peter's thinking of Daniel, then he's saying this prophecy in Daniel is about us, about the church, not about the end of the world, about Peter's own readers in the first century. The time of the end of the Jewish order was marked by the coming of Christ and the Holy Spirit. The prophets in the Old Testament in general predicted that the Messianic kingdom would be inaugurated by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

You find this in Isaiah, you find it in Zechariah, you find it in Joel, find it in a number of places. Spirit being poured out is at the beginning of the Messianic age. Pentecost, the Spirit was poured out.

Peter said, this is what Joel said. In the last days I'll pour out my Spirit, God said. Peter knew that they were living in the last days.

He knew they were at the time of the end. He knew that it was predicted and that we would be the ones, his readers and all Christians, but his readers especially because they were actually facing that very end. They were quite near to that time of that end.

But the point here is that Peter seems to be looking at Daniel 12 when he's talking here and he identifies the subject matter as us and our salvation. That's what Daniel 12 is talking about according to Peter unless he's not talking about Daniel 12. And if he's not, then it's totally up for grabs what he is talking about because there's no Old Testament information for him to make these statements from unless it's Daniel 12.

Now the reason that's interesting is because the verses at the beginning of Daniel 12 are often applied to the end of the world and the resurrection. I have come on other grounds to suspect they are talking about the end of Jerusalem. Even the statement in Daniel 12, 1 where it says there will be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even until that time.

That sounds like what Jesus said about the great tribulation that he said would happen in that generation. Great tribulation such as never was, never will be said Matthew 24, 21.

It sounds like Daniel is talking about the same thing the Olivet Discourse is talking about.

And true, it does sound like the resurrection in verse 2. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. We think of those verses as the resurrection, but if we give it some more thought we might find that it has a relevance to the shift from the old covenant to the new. I don't have the time or else I would tell you why I think it does and what cross references I would use to say so.

But you've got to do some of the work yourself around here, you know. I can't do all you're thinking for you. Anyway, Peter, I think, is giving us a glimpse at the apostolic understanding of Daniel 12.

When he talks about the prophets who spoke about the grace coming to us, we're the generation, not theirs, not the prophets, but the apostolic Christian's generation, they're the ones that this information was talking about. And even the angels desire to look into it, he says. And we see that in Daniel 12.

One angel is asking the other, hey, how long is this all going to be? You know, stuff. What's the question here? Searching what or what manner of time? The spirit of Christ who is in them signified. So it's very interesting to me how verses 10 through 12 seem to shed some light, probably, on Daniel 12, which is the hardest chapter in Daniel to know what to say about.

And it's nice to have an apostolic commentary of some sort on it, even though it's not detailed. And this becomes a turning point in chapter one. And thus, we will take a break here and our next session of First Peter will continue through the chapter.

We'll be right back.